

## Minutes

### PETITION HEARING - CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PROPERTY AND BUSINESS SERVICES

6<sup>th</sup> July 2011

Meeting held at Committee Room 3 and 3a - Civic  
Centre, High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



	<p><b>Committee Members Present:</b> Councillor Jonathan Bianco</p> <p><b>LBH Officers Present:</b> Boe Williams-Obasi (Senior Corporate Landlord Manager) and Khalid Ahmed (Democratic Services Manager)</p> <p><b>Also Present:</b> Councillors Lynne Allen, Wayne Bridges, Jazz Dhillon, Beulah East, Janet Gardner, Roshan Lal Ghei, Dominic Gilham, Phoday Jarjussey, Peter Kemp, Mo Khursheed and Avtar Singh Sandhu.</p>	
1.	<p><b>TO CONFIRM THAT THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE IN PUBLIC</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That all items be considered in public.</p>	Action by
2.	<p><b>FORMER HAYES LIBRARY, GOLDEN CRESCENT, HAYES – PETITION OBJECTING TO THE SALE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>Councillors Janet Gardner, Phoday Jarjussey and Mo Khursheed attended the meeting as Ward Councillors. A number of other Members of the Council attended the meeting.</p> <p>At the start of the meeting, Councillor Bianco informed the meeting that at the Council meeting on 7 July 2011 consideration would be given to a second petition on the same matter. This second petition comprised of more than 2,500 signatures and the lead petitioner represented the Sikh Temple in Hayes. Petitions of over 2,500 valid signatures required a debate at full Council (as opposed to a normal Petition Hearing). This was in accordance with the Council's Constitution which had been updated in December 2010 to reflect new statutory petition rules brought about by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.</p> <p><i>Concerns and suggestions raised by Mr John McDonnell, MP and the petition organisers at the meeting included the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Former Hayes Library on Golden Crescent was a much cherished community building in Hayes which was a building of</li></ul>	Action by

great character and heritage

- Many community organisations ranging from children to the elderly had used the facility which was one of few community facilities in Hayes
- Overall residents were pleased with the new Botwell Leisure Centre which housed the new library and swimming pool but residents hoped the former library would be retained for community use
- The retention of the former library as a resource for young people would give the younger people of Hayes a facility which would alleviate some of the problems caused by youths congregating on the streets
- The elderly residents of Hayes could use the facility as a “drop-in” centre
- The former library was one of the last remaining heritage buildings in Hayes
- There were many cultural and religious sections of the community who wanted to work in partnership with the Council on a project to retain the building which would be an opportunity for Community Cohesion work
- The Community could look at raising funds in partnership with the Council to provide a community resource at the building
- A feasibility study could be undertaken to see what revenue and capital resources would be needed to improve the building
- Reference was made to the setting up of a Conservation Panel around two years ago which identified the building as a building of great significance
- If the site was sold and developed for flats the heritage of the building would be lost
- Reference was made to the need for a site for the Police within Hayes as their present site was not big enough and the former library could be an option
- There were two Safer Neighbourhood Teams within the area that did not have premises and the former library could be an option
- There was a belief that there were funds which community groups could obtain to carry out such a project. Details of these were provided in a paper submitted to the Cabinet Member
- The petitioners requested that the Council did not go for an immediate sale of the site and gave consideration to the Council working in partnership with the Council
- Reference was made to the Localism Bill and the proposals relating to community asset transfer and the library would fall into this category as it was a redundant building. This would become legislation in around 4 months time
- The retention of the former library could be a important feature in terms of the long term future of Hayes Town Centre
- Reference was made to Barra Hall where a community group was formed when the building was looking to be sold by the Council. Funding was obtained from the Government (£600,000), LBH (£150,000) and £150,000 from a Trust. This

had been a great success and was a good example of the community working together

- The capital receipt the Council would receive for the former library would not be substantial
- This initiative would have the support of the community of Hayes, of Hayes Partnership and of Ward Councillors
- Assurances have been given in the past by the Council, that when the former library became available, the community would be given the opportunity to use this building for the community. Reference was also given to a pledge given by the Leader that the facility would be handed over to the community
- The Council should consider delaying any final decision on the future of the building to enable consideration to be given to the proposals by residents
- Representatives from the Somalia, Muslim and Sikh communities expressed their support to all faith groups and community groups, working together on this project
- Hayes was generally a deprived area within the Borough with substantial needs and this facility would help the community as a whole
- Reference was made to the lack of playgroups within Hayes with the recent closure of 3 of them in the last 5 years , and the former library being a possible facility for a playgroup
- Opposition was raised to the construction of flats on this site and the problem of car parking which would result
- The Council should be looking to sell off the old swimming pool building as this would bring a larger capital receipt to the Council
- One of the reasons given for the sale was to provide funding for additional school places in the Borough and a comment was made that selling the former library would indicate that the south of the Borough was having to pay for these education places
- Hayes needed community facilities instead of more housing development
- A representative of the Somalia community referred to his organisation wanting to start a school within Hayes
- A consultation with the local community should have taken place prior to any decision being taken by the Council on the future of the building. This process could still be undertaken to allow full consideration to be given to all the issues raised by residents and community groups
- All options could be considered, a feasibility study could be carried out within a set timescale and residents would then be satisfied that all options had been given fair and full consideration

Councillor Bianco listened to the concerns of the petitioners, thanked them for their presentations and responded to the points raised.

- A decision on the two petitions received would be made at or after the Council meeting on 7 July 2011
- There had been substantial interest from many faith groups in

this building

- The Council had looked at the sale option for the building because of the capital receipt it would generate which would contribute to the Council's Capital receipts Programme and would contribute to the funding for additional school places in the south of the Borough
- Projections were that at least 30-45 forms of entry were required for primary schools within the Borough
- The Council faced financial difficulties in respect of the school's programme and it was looking at a number of assets within the Borough with a view to selling and generating capital receipts
- Before the petitions had been submitted the Council had looked at residential conversion of the building but keeping the existing building
- The building was being vandalised and keeping it secure and safe was becoming difficult
- Reference was made to the Botwell Leisure Centre, where community groups used these facilities
- If the site was sold, it would be for the best bid and the best value to this Council and it would not just be to one particular group
- The Council also had an obligation to the 4/5 year olds of the Borough, as they were also part of the community and there was a need for more school places
- The majority of extra school, places needed were in the south of the Borough
- Consideration might be given to delaying a decision on the future of this building to enable all options and considerations to be given
- There was a possibility that the use of the building as a community facility could work
- The proposal to develop the building for residential use would be for a single storey development only
- The reason for the long leasehold for the site was to ensure that when the site was sold, it would be for the use intended by the Council only
- The sites of the former library and the old swimming pools were not big enough or suitable to develop for a school to the standard acceptable for this Council
- In relation to the old swimming pool site, the Council was waiting for an upturn in the housing market before selling the site
- The Council represented all residents of all the Borough and worked closely with all community groups
- This Council had a programme of keeping libraries open and actually opening new libraries, which was against the national trend
- Botwell Leisure Centre was a new state of the art facility and there had been a significant increase in usage. A number of community groups used the facility
- A counter argument to the suggestion that a residential development would generate more traffic, was that a community

development would also generate traffic

Councillor Bianco informed the petitioners that the points and issues raised this evening would be taken away for further consideration and further discussions would take place on the options available for the future of the former Hayes library.

**RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Business Services**

1. **Noted the petition received and listened to the views of petitioners;**
2. **Informed the petitioners that no final decision would be made on the future of the former Hayes library until after the petition at the Council meeting on 7 July 2011 had been heard;**
3. **That further discussions would take place on the options available to the Council on the future of the former Hayes library**

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

To allow the Cabinet Member to consider the petition with the petitioners.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

As identified with the petitioners

The meeting, which commenced at 7.10pm, closed at 8.30pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Khalid Ahmed on 01895 250833. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.